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PATENT

Docket No.: RCA90121
[N0661-00131]

wherein the control device is adapted to use associated descriptors from a plurality of appliances to aggregate appliance control functions of the same type for a plurality of appliances in order to display aggregated functions on a single markup language page of a display of the control device.

23/ 11. (New) The system of claim 10, further comprising at least one interface circuit coupled between the at least one appliance and the control device.

12. (New) The system of claim 11, wherein the at least one interface circuit is adapted to store the at least one associated descriptor therein.

REMARKS

Drawings

10 The Examiner objects to Figures 1-4 under 37 C.F.R. 1.83(a) as failing to show certain descriptive labeling from the specification. Figures 1-4 include all the descriptive references utilized in the specification of the present application. Accordingly, the Applicant requests withdrawal, or at the very least clarification, of this objection.

Specification

The Examiner has objected to the Abstract as not being clear and concise. Applicant submits herewith a new Abstract which conforms to the requirements for an Abstract set forth in the M.P.E.P. Thus, reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection is requested.

19 25 The Examiner also objects to the Specification as including an embedded hyperlink as prohibited by M.P.E.P. § 608.01. The text that appears at page 11, line 11-12 of the present application is not an embedded hyperlink or other browser executable code. Rather, the text appearing at lines 11-12 of page 11 is an example of syntax which may be used to define a 'volume' function in the present invention. As far as the Applicant is aware there is no prohibition in the M.P.E.P regarding exemplary computer code. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

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§102 Rejections

Claims 1-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Humpleman et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,198,479). For the reasons outlined below, this ground of rejection is respectfully traversed.

The present application discloses a method and apparatus for controlling a variety of equipment (EQ1, EQ2 - EQN) from a single control device (CTR). The control device CTR preferably includes a microprocessor 11, a memory 12, an internal bus 13 and a character generator 14 (See Fig. 1). The equipment EQ1, EQ2 - EQN is coupled to the control device CTR through a plurality of interface circuits I1, I2 - IN and a data bus B.

Humpleman teaches a system and method for controlling various home devices using a browser-based control device. Figure 1 shows a collection of home devices 102 (DTV), 104 (DSS-NIU), 108 (DVD), 110 (DVCR) and 120 (security system) which are connected as a network 100. The digital television (DTV) 102 includes a browser-based interface which can receive and display graphical user interfaces (GUIs) associated with each home device in the network 100.

Figure 5A shows an exemplary display of the DTV 102 which shows device links 406 for each home device (e.g., DTV 102, DVD 108, etc.). Figure 11 shows an exemplary display of the DTV 102 showing a 'session' page 902. The session page 902 includes device buttons 712 corresponding to various home devices, and top level home pages 804, 904 for certain selected devices.

Claim 1 now recites:

Control device in a home network including a plurality of appliances, wherein each appliance has an associated descriptor comprising information for controlling said appliance, said control device including: a microprocessor for loading and processing descriptors associated with the appliances, a graphics generator for generating a display of markup language pages or page parts based on said descriptors, said control device adapted to use descriptors of a plurality of appliances to aggregate appliance control

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functions of the same type for a plurality of appliances, in order to display aggregated functions on a single markup language page.
[emphasis added].

4 Humpleman fails to disclose or suggest "aggregating" functions of the same type "on a single markup language page" as recited in independent claim 1. At page 5 of the Office Action, the Examiner states that Humpleman meets the "aggregating" limitation (previously in dependent claim 4) because Figure 11 of Humpleman shows the control pages (e.g., home pages 804, 904) for two separate devices (e.g., "Dad's TV" and "Jim's DVD") displayed on a single page (session page 902).

10 However, Humpleman nowhere discloses or suggests "[aggregating] appliance control functions of the same type for a plurality of appliances" (emphasis added). At best, Humpleman discloses displaying the controls for two separate appliances on a single page; Humpleman does not in any way disclose or suggest 'aggregating' those controls which are of a similar type.

13 For example, the present specification discloses 'aggregating' controls of the same type, such as volume controls (See specification, page 6, lines 31-38). Such an aggregation would permit all appliances with a volume control (e.g., television, receiver, etc.) to be controlled from a single markup language page. Humpleman does not disclose or suggest such an invention. In fact, Humpleman teaches away from such an invention in that Figure 11 in the Humpleman patent shows each 'home device' (appliance) having its own separate control page. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of this ground of rejection with respect to claims 1-7 is respectfully requested.

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22 With specific reference to dependent claim 3, Humpleman also fails to disclose or suggest "loading a descriptor from an internet server" wherein "the address of the descriptor [is] loaded from the appliance with which the descriptor is associated." The Examiner points to column 18, lines 54-60 of Humpleman in addressing this claim limitation. However, Humpleman clearly states that each 'home device' supplies its HTML files (descriptors) directly to the DTV 102. Humpleman nowhere discloses or suggests a 'home device' that transmits a

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descriptor "address" to a control device (e.g., DTV 102), such that the control device utilizes the address to obtain the descriptor. As stated above, Humpleman teaches loading the descriptor itself into the DTV 102. For this additional reason, reconsideration and withdrawal of this ground of rejection with respect to claim 3 is respectfully requested.

Independent claim 8 includes similar limitations to those discussed above with respect to claim 1. In particular, claim 8 recites "creating at least one markup language page comprising aggregated appliance control functions of the same type for a plurality of appliances." Accordingly, for the reasons discussed above with reference to claim 1, reconsideration and withdrawal of this ground of rejection with respect to claim 8 is also requested.

Claims 9-11 have been added to present application by this Amendment. Claim 9 is a dependent claim added to specify an additional feature of the invention. Claims 10 and 11 are added to further clarify the scope of the present invention.

In view of the foregoing remarks and amendments, Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance at an early date, which action is earnestly solicited.

The Assistant Commissioner for Patents is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees or credit any excess payment which may be associated with this communication to deposit account 04-1679.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: 2/5/03



Darius C. Gambino
Reg. No.: 41,472
Attorney For Applicants

DUANE MORRIS LLP
One Liberty Place
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-7396
(215) 979-1281 (Telephone)
(215) 979-1020 (Fax)

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Version With Markings to Show Changes Made

Abstract

A method and apparatus for controlling a plurality of appliances in a home network, in which each appliance in the network has an associated descriptor comprising information for controlling the appliance. A control device for controlling the plurality of appliances includes a microprocessor for loading and processing descriptors associated with the appliances and a graphics generator for generating a display of markup language pages or page parts based on the descriptor information. The control device uses descriptors of a plurality of appliances to aggregate appliance control functions of the same type for a plurality of appliances in order to display aggregated functions on a single page[A control device in a home network, in which each appliance has an associated descriptor comprising information for controlling the appliance is provided, as well as an associated method. The control device comprises

- a microprocessor for loading and processing descriptors associated with the appliances,
- a graphics generator for generating a display of markup language pages or page parts based on said descriptor information.

The control device uses descriptors of a plurality of appliances to aggregate appliance control functions of the same type for a plurality of appliances in order to display aggregated functions on a single page.].

Claims

1. (Amended) Control device [(CTR)] in a home network including a plurality of appliances, wherein each appliance has an associated descriptor [comprising a set of HTML pages or page parts]comprising information for controlling said appliance, said control device [having]including:

a microprocessor[- means] for loading and processing descriptors associated with the appliances,

a graphics generator for generating a display of markup language[- means (D) for displaying HTML] pages or page parts based on said descriptors[for the descriptors loaded, a

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descriptor containing configuration data which identifies an appliance as a source and/or a receiver of a data type], said control device adapted to use descriptors of[using configuration data for] a plurality of appliances to aggregate appliance control functions of the same type for a plurality of appliances, in order to display aggregated functions on a single markup language page[create at least one configuration page in order to allow the user to specify the connections between appliances].

2. (Amended) Device according to Claim 1, wherein said microprocessor is programmed to load a descriptor [is loaded]directly from the appliance with which it is associated, said descriptor being stored in a memory in this appliance.

3. (Amended) Device according to Claim 1, wherein said microprocessor is programmed to load a descriptor [is loaded]from an [I]internet server, the address of the descriptor being loaded from the appliance with which the descriptor is associated.

4. Cancelled.

5. (Amended) Device according to Claim 1, wherein said[a] descriptor contains at least one of the following functions: display of static information relating to the appliance, display of dynamic information relating to the appliance, or display of an object for controlling a function of the appliance.

6. (Amended) Device according to Claim 5, wherein, when said[a] descriptor contains an object for controlling a function of an appliance, as well as[it also contains] a program for generating a[the] corresponding command to be transmitted to the appliance with which the set is associated.

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7. (Amended) Device according to Claim 1, wherein said descriptor comprises configuration data identifying an appliance as a source or receiver of a data type, said microprocessor being programmed to create at least one configuration page for allowing the user to specify the connections between appliances, and wherein the at least one configuration page indicates [all the]possible connections[configurations].

8. (Amended) Method of controlling at least one appliance in a domestic communication network having a control device connected to a display device, comprising the steps of:

[- of]loading[, using said control device, descriptors comprising a set of HTML pages or page parts for controlling at least one appliance associated with the descriptors, said] descriptors containing data identifying functions for controlling at least one appliance[configuration data which identifies an appliance as a source and/or a receiver of a data type], and

[- of]creating[, using said control device,] at least one markup language page comprising aggregated appliance control functions of the same type for a plurality of appliances[configuration page from the configuration data for a plurality of appliances in order to allow the user to specify the connections between appliances].

9. (New) Method according to claim 8, wherein a descriptor is loaded from a internet server based on an address provided by an appliance associated with said descriptor.

10. (New) A system for controlling at least one appliance in a network comprising:

a control device; and
at least one appliance coupled to the control device,
wherein the at least one appliance has at least one associated descriptor which is transmitted to the control device and displayed by the control device, and
wherein the control device is adapted to use associated descriptors from a plurality of appliances to aggregate appliance control functions of the same type for a plurality of appliances

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in order to display aggregated functions on a single markup language page of a display of the control device.

11. (New) The system of claim 10, further comprising at least one interface circuit coupled between the at least one appliance and the control device.

12. (New) The system of claim 11, wherein the at least one interface circuit is adapted to store the at least one associated descriptor therein.

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